

## Château Valandraud 2018

CSPC# 848134

750mlx6

15.5% alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	90% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Malbec
<b>Appellation</b>	St. Emilion
<b>Classification</b>	Promoted 1st Grand Cru Classé B in 2012
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://valandraud.fr/en/">http://valandraud.fr/en/</a>
<b>General Info</b>	<p>In 1989, Jean-Luc Thunevin and his wife Murielle bought a tiny 1.5-acre plot in Saint-Émilion near Châteaux Pavie-Macquin, Ausone, and La Clotte. Without the capital to build a full winery, a nearby garage was used...</p> <p>The resulting wine, Château de Valandraud, was first released in 1991 (the name "Valandraud" is an amalgam of "Vallon de Fongaban" –where its vines grow– and "Andraud" –Murielle's maiden name). By 1995, it was rated 95 by Robert Parker. Thus, was born the "garage wine" movement, so influential in the 1990s, and earning Thunevin the nickname of "Bad Boy". In 2012, Château Valandraud has been promoted as a 1st classified growth of Saint Emilion. In 2017, Château Valandraud became a full member of Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux</p>
<b>Winemaker</b>	Eric Talavet. Jean-Luc Thunevin and Murielle Andraud - owners.
<b>Vintage</b>	<p>2018 Saint Emilion was not an easy vintage for producers. The winter months were easy, but the spring is one of the wettest in history. Depending on where you located in St. Emilion, during the initial 6 months of the year, between 550 mm to 600 mm (21"-24") of rain soaked your soils. This is more than the normal amount of rain the region experiences in a year!</p> <p>From there growers fended off violent attacks of mildew, which struck fast and furious. 2018 Saint Emilion was saved by the hottest, driest, sunniest vintage conditions since 2003. Barely any rain fell from July to harvest.</p> <p>Picking took place under warm, sunny, and dry conditions. On average, production was down 10-20% for many vineyards. Conditions were so good between late September and mid-October; vigneron were able to pick at their chosen level of maturity. Harvesting took place from mid-September to mid-October.</p>
<b>Vineyards</b>	<p>While Valandraud started off as a small St. Emilion property, over the years, Jean Luc and Murielle have increased holdings due to continued purchases of vineyard land. Today, the property is 10 hectares. The vines are located in various areas in St. Emilion. Valandraud produces red and white wine. For the red wine, the terroir varies, but the best soils consist of clay and limestone. At Valandraud, they are one of the few St. Emilion estates to include some plantings of all five, Bordeaux grape varieties; Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Carmenère. For the white wines, they have plantings of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.</p> <p>In all, Valandraud is produced from 10 hectares of vines. 8 hectares are devoted to plantings for the red varieties. the vineyards are planted to 70 % Merlot, 20% Cabernets Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and small portions of Malbec and Carmenère. 2 hectares are devoted to the production of white wine, which is split evenly between Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.</p>
<b>Harvest</b>	Manual harvest. Harvest dates unknown.
<b>Vinification</b>	A combination of traditional and modern techniques is used at every step of the production: double Guyot pruning, de-suckering, thinning, green harvesting... The harvest is done manually and lasts only a few days. A first grape sorting is done directly in the vineyard in order to pick only the ripest bunches. Once brought to the "organic" spirited cellar of Mr. Thunevin, the grapes are sorted one more time, before being de-stemmed. The following step consists in bursting the grapes. The very rich and pure must produce is run into the fermenting vats (wood, stainless steel or concrete). The winemaking of Château Valandraud takes place with regular
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	



pumping over and punching down of the cap. At the end of the alcoholic fermentation, the new Valandraud cuvee is poured into 100% new French oak and aged for 22 months.

**Tasting Notes** In what was a great year for Bordeaux, the prestigious Premier Grand Cru Classe of Saint-Emilion – Chateau Valandraud – has produced in 2018 a vintage that will mark the history of the property.

Spread over 8.88 hectares, the vineyard of Chateau Valandraud is planted in an exceptional clay-limestone soil on the right bank of Bordeaux. The vines are 30 years old on average.

Fruit of a blend of Merlot (90%), Cabernet Franc (4%), Cabernet Sauvignon (3%) and Malbec (3%), the Chateau Valandraud 2018 is matured between 24 and 36 months in 100% new oak barrels.

Unanimously acclaimed by international critics, the Chateau Valandraud 2018 ranks among the elite Grands Crus Classes of Saint-Emilion in a very good vintage for Bordeaux.

**Serve with** Valandraud is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Valandraud is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.

**Production** 2,915 cases made

**Cellaring** Drink 2023-2036

**Scores/Awards** **95 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - January 2021  
**96-99 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - June 2019  
**96+ points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - March 2021  
**95-97+ points** - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - April 2019  
**98 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - March 2021  
**97-98 points** - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2019  
**97 points/Cellar Selection** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2021  
**96-98 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2019  
**17 points** - Tom Parker, JancisRobinson.com - October 2020  
**16.5+ points** - Julia Harding, JancisRobinson.com - April 2019  
**95 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - November 2020  
**96 points** - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - April 2019  
**97 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2021  
**96-98 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2019  
**16.5+ points** - Farr Vintner - April 2019  
**95 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - March 2021  
**94-96 points** - Neal Martin, Vinous - November 2019  
**97+ points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - March 2021  
**94-97 points** - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2019  
**98 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2021  
**96-98 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2019  
**96 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - February 2021  
**96 points** - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com (score only) - March 2019  
**15 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2020  
**17 points** - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - June 2019

**Reviews** *"This shows off a range of loganberry, black currant and fig notes that are enticing in feel thanks to racy acidity, while singed sandalwood, incense and bay details line the finish. Sneaky length too. Lovely. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec. Best from 2023 through 2036. 2,915 cases made."*  
- JM, Wine Spectator

*"This is richly fruited, with waves of fleshy raspberry, boysenberry and red currant cruising through, inlaid with singed vanilla and apple wood notes along the way. Shows density and cut through the finish, with a tug of tobacco at the end. This is dialed up to 11. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. 2,915 cases made."*

- JM, Wine Spectator

**Reviews** *“Deep purple-black in color, the 2018 Valandraud is still sporting a fair bit of oak on the nose, with the cedary notions giving way to a profound core of Black Forest cake, stewed plums and boysenberry preserves, plus suggestions of espresso, clove oil, unsmoked cigars and charcuterie with a waft of Chinese five spice. The full-bodied palate is jam-packed with rich black fruit preserves, framed by sturdy tannins and just enough freshness, finishing long and tinged with exotic spices. It will need a good 5-6 years for everything to marry and for the nuances to be fully expressed, then enjoy it over the next 25+ years.”*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“Deep purple-black in color, the 2018 Valandraud develops slowly from a base of warm black cherries, blackberry compote and preserved plums with a perfume of sandalwood, Indian spices, lavender, wilted roses, mocha and fruitcake plus wafts of woodsmoke and camphor. Full-bodied, the palate is rich, ripe and flamboyant with tons of opulent black and blue fruit layers, wonderfully curtailed by a firm frame of velvety tannins and fantastic freshness, finishing very long and very seductive.”*  
- LPB, Wine Advocate

*“This is really rich and intense with beautiful blackberry, violet and blueberry aromas that follow through to a full-bodied palate with extremely polished tannins that caress your palate. Love the texture and purity to the wine. Fantastic. Try after 2025.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This is a fantastic young Bordeaux with superb depth of fruit and complex tannin structure. Hints of smoke, spice, and toasted oak. Full body and firm, dusty tannins. Very long finish.”*  
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“This release continues the great run of vintages from this estate, based in the eastern part of Saint-Emilion. Powerful tannins are echoed by sumptuous black-plum and berry flavors. The high alcohol shows in the density although this concentrated wine does stay comfortably in balance. It needs plenty of aging. Don't drink before 2027. \*Cellar Selection\*.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“A very fine vintage from this estate, this beautifully structured with rich tannins, spicy fruit and great concentration. The juicy acidity and power of the wine are impressive, giving firm tannins, great ripeness and a solid, concentrated texture.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Black with barely a rim. Very archetypal New World on the nose: sweet, ripe fruit and toasty oak. Barossa Shiraz? Thick, chewy, rich, and sweet. Nothing in moderation but it is all in harmony. A hard wine for the table – at least for the next 10 years. Will give pleasure but not classic Bordeaux pleasure. Impressive rather than enjoyable. There is some freshness on the finish, just. (JH)”*  
- JH, JancisRobinson.com

*“Opaque ruby colour in the glass. Coffee and blackberry on the nose with a hint of incense. The palate has massive concentration and richness, with dense and powerful black fruit to the fore. Richly tannic but matched by the weight and ripeness of fruit, this is not for the faint-hearted. Despite the richness, it is not as excessive as some iterations in the past. Impressive, age worthy, but warming. (TP)”*  
- TP, JancisRobinson.com

*“Polished gourmet fruit right from the first nose, this is an accomplished and powerful Valandraud that has seductive and appealing notes of burnt caramel and pencil shavings set against rich black cherry and damson fruits. Clear ripeness through the finish, with full concentration of fruit. This is a big wine, confident and sure to please, but worth noting it's at a full 15.5%, higher than many in the vintage. 100% new oak. Drinking Window 2026 – 2042.”*  
- JA, Decanter.com

## Reviews

*“Rich, deep, powerful and hugely persistent, this has tons of juicy black fruits but clearly in the more restrained frame that owner Jean Luc Thunevin has introduced over the past few vintages. It's a brilliant wine, full of personality, keeping its concentration and glamour and just easing towards balance, but still with its signature insouciance. Tasted several times and always delicious, this just pips the excellent 2016 for me. 3% Malbec completes the blend, the first time it's been included in the wine. 40hl/ha yield. 3.6pH. 100% new oak for extended ageing. Drinking Window 2027 – 2042.”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“Inky dark in hue, the wine opens with a flamboyant perfume of licorice, barbecue smoke, black cherry, blackberry, blueberry, espresso and plum liqueur. On the palate, the wine is as rich as the color. Multi-layered, opulent, showy, and intense, the wine gracefully coats your palate with waves of perfectly ripe, velvety textured, sweet dark fruits. 2018 is one of the best vintages of Valandraud produced yet. If you follow their wines, you know that is really saying something! This will age gracefully for at least 2-3 decades with ease.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Gird yourself for a hue akin to squid ink and then get ready... Swirling brings out the campfire embers, flowers, licorice, espresso, incense, black cherry liqueur, chocolate and plum. This is concentrated, rich and powerful. It's easy to notice the vitality on the palate. The finish is dense, long, fresh, fruity, and spicy with vanilla, cherry and licorice in the end note.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Deep purple in colour. This has an exotic nose of liquorice, damson, and ripe blackberry. Still sweet and bold on the palate, there is a toning down of the most extreme elements to this year's Valandraud, and it is all for the better. The tannins are rich but in balance with the fruit, complementing rather than dominating the sweetness. The opulent ripeness is on the right side of jammy, and there is enough acidity to retain the freshness. The result is a powerful, exuberant and impressive wine with a long and heady finish.”*

- Farr Vintners

*“The 2018 Valandraud packs a punch on the nose, delivering a complex array of scents: blackberry, raspberry, freshly picked violets and a touch of mint. The oak is beautifully integrated. The palate is medium-bodied with saturated tannins and commingled blue and blackberry fruit. Sweet and candied toward the finish, which has an almost Burgundian texture. Somehow quite Asian in style, with touches of hoisin on the aftertaste, this is a very classy and completely delicious Valandraud. 2025 – 2050”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2018 Valandraud was picked "un peu tard" (a bit late) according to Jean-Luc Thunevin. It has a gorgeous, very pure, and intense bouquet with black cherries, cassis and raspberry coulis fruit, floral scents that emerge with time. The palate is silky smooth with beautifully integrated new oak, a fine bead of acidity thanks to the cold clayey soils and northerly exposure. The finish is opulent but very controlled and persistent. If you love Valandraud, you will hold this up as one of the best Jean-Luc Thunevin has crafted.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2018 Valandraud is every bit as compelling as it was from barrel, maybe more. Power and vertical, with tons of explosive energy, the 2018 dazzles right out of the gate. Inky dark cherry, plum, chocolate, spice, new leather, licorice, and chocolate all race across the palate. The 2018 is a wine of tremendous stature that distinguishes itself in a vintage peppered with stunning wines. I would allow for a few years in bottle to help the tannins soften. I loved it. 2028 – 2043”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2018 Valandraud is magnificent. Unctuous and super-concentrated on the palate, the 2018 possesses off the charts richness. Crème de cassis, bittersweet chocolate, hard candy, lavender, menthol, licorice, mint, and dark spice all meld together. The 2018 is quite shut down at this stage, which is probably a good thing for its long-term prospects. This is the first time since the early 1990s that Malbec has appeared in the blend. Yields came in at 48 hectoliters per hectare, a touch above the 45 or so that is more customary here.”*

- AG, Vinous

**Reviews** *“Another head-turning wine from Jean-Luc is his 2018 Château Valandraud, which is mostly Merlot blended with small amounts of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Its dense purple hue is followed by an incredible array of smoky black and blue fruits supported by notes of tobacco leaf, white chocolate, candied orange, and spice. This beauty has a deep, rich, powerful style yet holds onto a beautiful sense of purity and freshness, possessing ripe yet present tannins, plenty of textbook Saint-Emilion minerality, flawless balance, and a gorgeous finish. It reminds me of a slightly more approachable, elegant version of the 2016. Either way, it's rock star stuff. It can be drunk today with pleasure yet deserves 4-6 years of bottle age and will keep for 20-25+”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Another great vintage for Jean-Luc Thunevin’s flagship wine, the 2018 Château Valandraud sports a glass-staining purple color as well as a mammoth-sized personality in its blue and black fruits, liquid violets, and graphite aromas and flavors. Possessing incredible depth and richness, full body, sweet tannins, and a finish that won’t quit, it’s one of the most hedonistic wines in the vintage, yet also possesses purity, balance, and elegance. It’s a thrilling, blockbuster to drink over the coming two decades or more.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

---